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AUTHOR Bradshaw, Dan F.
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ABSTRACT

Participation by foreign diplomats in college level international relations courses is discussed. Emphasis is placed on how to locate diplomats, finance their visits, prepare students to interact intelligently with the diplomats, integrate diplomats into class activities, and avoid pitfalls associated with using diplomats in the classroom. Data are based on a survey of all embassies, legations, and missions listed in the "Diplomatic Directory" and on personal experience using foreign diplomats in courses on the Middle East, the crisis in Northern Ireland, and international terrorism. Findings indicated that, in general, embassies are receptive to invitations from colleges and universities. About half of all embassies which indicated they were willing to participate in college classroom activities indicated that they expected to pay all expenses for their personnel. Suggestions for increasing the success of a diplomat's visit include planning the visit and agenda far in advance, allowing for fluctuations in embassy schedules, providing encounters with small groups of informed students, asking diplomats for advice on how to question other diplomats more intelligently, arranging adequate press coverage, and escorting the diplomat to interesting places in the community. (DB)

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Dan F. Bradshaw, Associate Professor
Kentucky Wesleyan College
Owensboro, Ky. 42301

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"The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!..Aren't They? Using the Foreign Diplomatic Community in the College Classroom"

I have enlisted twenty foreign diplomats as classroom resource persons on seven different occasions.[1] They have participated in the following classes: The Contemporary Middle East, Crisis in Northern Ireland, and Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Tactics. At the risk of killing the proverbial golden-egg-laying-goose, it seems appropriate to record my experiences and assess the value of diplomats as a classroom resource. This article will estimate the availability of diplomats. It will address the issues of expense and suggest efficient ways to utilize diplomats. It also will identify some problems associated with using diplomats in the classroom. I somewhat reluctantly submit this paper, hoping you will find it interesting, but hoping you will decide not to use diplomats for your own classes. There are a limited number of diplomats to go around and an increased demand for their services might jeopardize my standard operating procedure.

For statistical data, I mailed a questionnaire to every embassy, legation, and mission listed in the Diplomatic Directory (1975 edition).[2] Of the 126 embassies and missions listed, I received fifty-four responses; however, I know three other embassies which provide speakers but which did not respond to the questionnaire. I added those three prodigals to the ones which answered for a total of fifty-seven, an acceptable return rate of 45%

Those fifty-seven responses represented a good geographical and political

SO 012 443

distribution. Countries large and small, rich and developing, politically committed and non-aligned answered the questionnaire:

AREA	RESPONSES
Central and South America	five
Africa	nine
Asia	seven
Western Europe	eight
Scandinavia	three
Eastern Europe	five
Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East	five
South Asia	three
Other	twelve

The most prominent aspect of this distribution is that every Middle Eastern country except Iraq responded, and responded favorably. When I first started teaching a course on the Middle East (in 1974), I invited every embassy in the region to participate in a speakers program. At that time, only two embassies showed enough interest to ~~comply~~ accept: Israel and Turkey. The Egyptian embassy vacillated until the last moment then decided against participating. The Syrians and Jordanians flatly refused, and the Saudi Arabians sent me tourist materials. Times changed. In 1976 I taught the course again. That time Israelis, Egyptians, and Syrians participated. In 1979 I taught the course again, and, this time, the Israelis, Egyptians, Jordanians, and Russians participated while the Syrians and Saudi Arabians had genuine scheduling conflicts and could not appear on their assigned dates. The Syrians and Saudi Arabians did not participate, but they were quite apologetic and both embassies offered representation at different times. Unfortunately, the alternate dates were inconvenient for our calender and, hence, we operated without Syrians and Saudi Arabians. Over the past half-dozen years, the Middle Eastern Moslem countries have become more

energetic and sophisticated in their public relation activities.

Embassies are receptive to invitations from colleges and universities. Forty-seven percent of the respondants indicated a willingness to send their people while another forty percent indicated a desire to do the same. Only eight (13%) of the respondants announced ~~that~~ they do not provide speakers for college/university programs. The eight rejections came from small countries and four of the eight cited staff smallness as the reason for not providing speakers. I suspect the same reason would apply to the other four. One of the four, ~~Switzerland~~ who (Switzerland), claimed staff smallness, ~~but~~ offered to provide interested colleges/universitites with the names of visiting nationals who would be available for programs. Part of a diplomat's job is to learn all he can about the host country; thus many diplomats enjoy the opportunity of traveling to colleges, meeting students, and, as one diplomat described it, "...observing the real America, the America outside the Washington--New York area."

These statistics indicate there is a significant number of diplomats based in Washington, New York, and in consulates-general around the country who will lend their expertise to the college classroom. For institutions with limited budgets, the next consideration might be, "how much does it cost to get a diplomat into your classroom?" The answer to that question is, not very much. Twenty-five responding embassies (51% of the embassies which supply speakers) expected to pay all expenses for their personnel; nine (18%) were willing to share expenses with the host institution; and only thirteen (27%) expected the host institution to pay all expenses. If these figures are representative, a professor who attracts a diplomat to his classroom has a 69% probability that his guest will pay all or at least part of his own expense.[3]

When I invite diplomats to our campus, I plead institutional poverty

and hope for the best. We pay no travel expense nor do we grant honoraria. We do provide ground transportation, meals, and lodging (sometimes in my home) once the diplomat arrives in Owensboro. In the fall of 1979 I accommodated and entertained four diplomats for under $300.00. One of the four, a Jordanian, insisted on paying ~~all of~~ his own expense and, indeed, he generously entertained my wife and me! The other three diplomats adhered to my usual procedure.

Diplomats usually remain in Owensboro for twenty-four hours and during that time I work them rather vigorously. The visitor will meet with classes other than my own, deliver publicly a position paper and answer questions from the floor, meet informally with students at my home, and submit himself to extensive media interviews.[4]

Using diplomats requires long-range planning. When asked (on the questionnaire), "how much time notice does your embassy require to make arrangements for providing speakers?" they answered, from two weeks to six months, but most believed two months was reasonable notice. Except for the Israeli Consul-General in Philadelphia, who is prompt and reliable, the embassies I have dealt with have been slow to ~~respond to my~~ answer invitations. In their behalf, there are good reasons for ~~their near-universal~~ tardiness. Their staffs are busy, and often the decision to delegate someone to a campus has to wait on a senior official who might be out of the country or distracted by more important matters. On one occasion, over a three month period, I wrote two letters and made eleven long distance telephone calls before the embassy in question politely refused my invitation.[5]

Sometimes an embassy's initial acceptance is reversed by the twists and turns of international events, and what had been a firm committment becomes an eleventh-hour cancellation. For instance, on November 21, 1977, the day before his arrival, the Jordanian diplomat was summoned to the United Nations in New York and he had to cancel. Or, this past fall, a member of

the PLO's mission to the United Nations was scheduled for November 19th; however, in mid-November the Israelis arrested the mayor of Nablus and threatened to deport him. Eleven other West Bank mayors talked resignation and the PLO's mission to the United Nations went into overdrive. A publicity trip to Kentucky Wesleyan College got pushed to the back burner, and on November 16th our would-be speaker regretably cancelled.

Although my programs primarily have been political, embassy personnel are competent and willing to deal with cultural, economic, social, etc. topics. Forty-one (84%) consenting embassies reported their ability to provide speakers for topics other than political.

The program format is critical, and the question that elicited the most controversy was: "Will your embassy provide speakers to sit with other diplomats on panels which have a politically sensitive theme?" Twenty-three of the embassies which provide speakers (47%) answered yes, seven (15%) answered no, and eighteen (38%) replied that it depended entirely upon circumstances and such requests would be dealt with individually.

Tactically, I prefer using diplomats individually rather than putting them on panels. My lone panel experience was less successful than it might have been. I had two outstanding panelists and an interesting and non-sensitive topic, "Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Tactics," and still the panel did not work as well as expected.[6] The panelists wandered from the topic and generally sniped at one another. As for the students, they were confused and overwhelmed. When my small classes (about a dozen students) meet privately with a single diplomat he has their undivided attention and, thus, is more at ease to build his case or answer questions. In addition, he can give us tips on how to interpret comments from a diplomat who came before him, or how to question one who will follow him. For instance, I always ask a visiting speaker, "the first secretary of the_____ embassy will visit us next week. What questions would you ask him?"

The most obvious difficulty working with diplomats is that one is never certain they will show up. In addition to embassy indecision, or late-breaking international events, the gods are imaginative and can intervene in whimsical ways to leave you with an irritated television crew and disappointed students. For instance, in December 1977 an Israeli speaker flying to Owensboro from Chicago via Louisville had his small commuter airplane blown off the runway as it tried to take-off. He was not injured, but the airplane got stuck in mud and he was unable to continue his journey. After exhausting every possible means of ground transportation to Owensboro, he flew back to Chicago.

I have used diplomats in three different ways: (1)a panel, ~~which was~~ described above, and ~~which was~~ less than successful; (2)jamming them together over a short period of time; e.g. three diplomats in three successive days; and (3)spreading them over several weeks; e.g. one diplomat per week for four consecutive weeks. I have been most pleased with the last technique. Logistically it is comfortable and, more important, having a week between speakers gives my ~~students~~ class time to meet ~~again~~ and consider what our former visitor said. This technique also allows us to plan for a future speaker. The second technique is compact, but logistically it is nightmarish; shuffeling diplomats on and off airplanes with little time for the unexpected is risky.

Programs which feature interesting and important resource persons contribute positively to a college's image and enhance its identity in the community. We get a lot of mileage from these programs just as we get excellent cooperation from our area's television, radio, and press. I do not ignore either the media or our public, but having made my share of mistakes by trying to do too much with diplomats in too short a time, I have settled on a scale of three priorities. First, I bring diplomats to

our campus to benefit my students; therefore I allot plenty of time for my students to meet informally and privately with our guest. I rarely invite anyone other than students to these private sessions because I want them to have center stage and not be intimidated by one of my colleagues or anyone else. Second, I arrange for diplomats to have as much press coverage as they want, or as much as they can stand. After a tiring commuter flight into Owensboro, two television interviews, a radio interview, and an hour or so with a newspaper reporter, our guest's desire for media exposure is satisfied. Third, and the least important priority, is the public presentation. Even the most industrious promotion draws only light crowds and, in my opinion, the public sessions are really not worth the time and effort. Our townspeople are perfectly content to encounter visiting firemen via 6:00 p.m. television or the next morning's newspaper and only a handfull of the most industrious ~~go to~~ take the trouble of attending a public forum.

Close contact with diplomats adds an invaluable dimension to a student's college experience. Time and again, over the past six years, former students have told me that that experience was the highlight of their academic career. The diplomatic corps is highly selective and career diplomats, particularly those posted to the United States, are intelligent, articulate, and quite personable.[7] Some diplomats are more candid and useful to the classroom than others; yet even those who say <u>little</u> say <u>something</u> for the student who has prepared two months for that visit. My students have surprised me with their ability to analyze a diplomatic position and, occasionally, recognize sham. That is worth the price of admission.

Mechanically, getting a diplomat to a college campus is a time-consuming process. It requires letters, telephone calls, and perhaps even personal

contact. Orchestrating a diplomat's movements and actions once you have him in your town can be bothersome. Evenso, the diplomatic corps is an outstanding classroom resource, ~~and is so~~ well worth the extra effort.

I conclude with some loose change and general observations which do not seem to fit elsewhere:

...refer to the Diplomatic Directory for addresses and telephone numbers. It helps if you know precisely the embassy person responsible for delegating speakers. In large embassies, requests sometimes bounce from office to office before finding the proper home. This causes delay.

...when inviting a diplomat to your area, particularly if you are off the beaten track, emphasize the uniqueness of your area and be prepared to escort your visitor around, even if only to "...a people's bar."

...encourage your visitor to bring his family. Diplomats sometimes can mix business with pleasure, turning a speaking engagement into a mini-vacation.

...if your visitor is Russian, do not be surprised if you receive a call from the FBI. The FBI often monitors Russian diplomats and their movements. Incidentally, discussing a Russian speaker with FBI agents is an interesting experience.

...if your visitor drives an automobile to your campus, be certain he has his route planned correctly. One of my diplomats told me he would leave Washington, D.C. at 10:00 a.m. and arrive in Owensboro, a thousand miles away, by 5:00 p.m. Foreigners sometimes underestimate the size of our country.

...diplomats have asked whether their pre-taped television interviews would appear on national television alongside Walter Cronkite. I replied that our area television stations serve Western Kentucky and Southern Indiana. This question indicated that foreigners sometimes fail to grasp American regionalism. They also underestimate the number of local

television stations.

...I always ask diplomats the question: "Of course you knew a lot about the United States before you arrived, but were you surprised at anything you found here?" The usual answer is a comment about the size or wealth of America. One diplomat thought for several minutes then replied, "I was stunned by the variety of entertainment possibilities in America." Then he ticked-off golf, bowling, boating, tennis, movies, cultural activities, hiking, skiing, vacationing, horse races, dog races, car races, etc.

...contact with foreign embassies can be very helpful to American travelers. In 1978 I visited Northern Ireland, and having acquaintances in Britain's Washington embassy opened important doors ~~at~~ ~~Stormont~~ which in Belfast, otherwise might have remained closed.

Endnotes

[1]For this study, I included staff from the Irish Northern Aid organization and the PLO though, of course, these agencies are not foreign countries and their personnel are not diplomats.

[2]See Appendix A. If I did it again, I would construct a better questionnaire. I would have asked, for instance, (1)how many requests per year does your embassy receive? (2)do I have authorization to publicize your embassy in case studies? (3)what is the size of your embassy?

[3]Compare this attitude with the prices which American public figures command for campus visits. Lesser lights get $750.00 while anyone you have heard of charges $2,000 to $5,000 for a one night stand. American State Department personnel require expenses.

[4]All the diplomats I have used have given press interviews. Indeed, image building is a primary reason for their visits. Curiously, however, of those polled, only 61% answered yes to the question: "Do your speakers grant press interviews?"

[5]That refusal did not end the story. Ironically, the same embassy telephoned me a few days before the requested date, announcing that Mr. _____ would arrive on such-and-such flight. Would I be so kind as to reserve a hotel room for him? Dumbfounded, I replied that Mr. _____'s office previously had cancelled and I had scheduled a different diplomat for that date. Mr. _____ then indignantly telephoned me, demanding his date! I could not shuffle dates around, ~~that late~~ so Mr._____ stayed in Washington.

On another occasion, the _____ embassy got its wires crossed and scheduled us its first secretary and its cultural attaché. Out of happenstance I telephoned that embassy the day before its eta to make certain Mr. A's flight plans were in order. My telephone call was routed to a different office where I was told that Mr. B would arrive at 11:00 a.m. I informed Mr. B's secretary that Mr. A. had been scheduled for five weeks and, though I would love to have two diplomats, one was sufficient. She hastily unscrambled the situation and Mr. A. arrived ~~right~~ on time. Thereafter, I routinely telephoned embassies at the last minute to check on arrangements.

[6]Both panelists' governments were conducting counter-insurgency warfare and, hence, agreed on the malignancy of terrorism.

[7]Diplomats repeatedly have told me that America is a plum posting: living conditions are more comfortable than many places, it is easy to work and get information in Washington, and, professionally, ~~diplomats~~ they enjoy the seat of power.